DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 263 459 CG 018 615

AUTHOR	Adams, Tom; Resnik, Hank
TITLE	Teens in Action. Creating a Drug-Free Future for America's Youth.
INSTITUTION	Pacific Inst. for Research and Evaluation, Walnut Creek, CA.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. on Drug Abuse (DHHS/PHS), Rockville, Md.
REPORT NO	DHHS-ADM-85-1376
PUB DATE	85
CONTRACT	NIDA-271-84-6703
NOTE	55p.; Photographs may not reproduce clearly.
AVAILABLE FROM	Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.
PUB TYPE	Guides - General (050)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Adolescents; Community Programs; *Drug Abuse; *Drug Use; Family Life; Mass Media; *Prevention; School Activities; Secondary Education; *Student Participation

ABSTRACT

This book on drug abuse prevention is addressed to teenagers and covers five main areas where drug use can be prevented: schools, communities, media, the social scene, and the family. The first chapter on school programs briefly discusses peer-led alcohol and drug education, peer counseling, creating a positive school climate, and developing school policies on drugs. Descriptions of the activities of four students to prevent drug use in their schools are included. The second chapter on community service outlines suggestions for youth involvement in activities that will help combat boredom and provide alternatives to drug use. Accounts of three teenagers' activities are included. The section on using the media highlights ways to counter the mixed messages about drugs that are currently presented and describes the work of two teenagers in different aspects of television programming. In "Changing the Social Scene," three young people recount their efforts to change social occasions to drug-free events. The section on parents and teens working together highlights the activities of youths from Washington, D.C., New York, and California. A final section outlines suggestions for preventing drug and alcohol abuse and for developing an action plan. An excerpt from Keith Schuchard's 1984 address to the PRIDE conference concludes the report. (MCF)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

TEENS IN ACTION

Creating a Drug-Free Future for America's Youth

---

by
Tom Adams
and
Hank Resnik

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

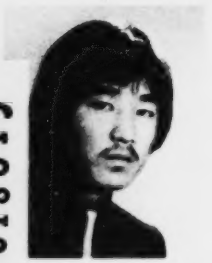
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Public Health Service
Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration

National Institute on Drug Abuse
Division of Prevention and Communications
Prevention Branch
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20857

ED263459

TEENS IN ACTION

Creating a Drug-Free Future for America's Youth



CG 018615

National Institute on Drug Abuse

This book was written by Tom Adams and Hank Resnik for the National Institute on Drug Abuse under contract No. 271-84-6703 (PYRAMID Project) to the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, Walnut Creek, California. Stephen Gardner, D.S.W., served as the NIDA project officer.

The text portion of this book may be reproduced without permission. The photographs may be reproduced only as part of a reprinting of the entire book.

DHHS Publication No. (ADM) 85-1376
Printed 1985

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402

THE WHITE HOUSE

During my travels across the country in the past several years, I have seen the devastating effects that drug and alcohol abuse can have in the lives of our youth. I am also excited and encouraged, however, by the increasing number of young people who have resisted the pressure to use drugs, and are working to help others do the same.

This book describes the problems, challenges, successes and hopes that 15 young people have experienced in trying to cope and succeed in an environment that too often promotes drug use, rather than discourages it. These young people are taking action against drug abuse in their homes, schools and communities.

I hope that we will soon see a nation of young people saying "NO" to drugs, and an end to the tragic effects of drug abuse on young lives.

Sincerely,

Nancy Reagan

FOREWORD

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has published many books that talk about youth and drugs. But most talk to adults about the problem, not to the young people themselves. *Teens in Action* is a new kind of book. It tells young people what they can do by showing what others have done.

The main concept is positive peer pressure and individual determination. Learning how to "say no" to drugs by organizing support groups, school activities and other programs can help establish a new drug-free environment. By getting involved in such activities, young people make a positive commitment for themselves at the same time they involve others in assuming a drug-free approach to growing up.

We hope that this book inspires young people across the country to lead productive, drug-free lives.

William Pollin, M.D.
Director
National Institute on Drug Abuse

INTRODUCTION

In an environment that encourages young people in many ways to smoke, drink, and use illicit drugs or other harmful substances, it is often difficult to say "no." However, there **are** many ways to lead drug- and alcohol-free lives. In planning this book, we were encouraged to find so many young people who not only have resisted drugs, but are sincerely concerned about their friends and acquaintances who are involved. More important, we found that many youth are actively working to help prevent drug abuse.

As this book demonstrates, young people can lead the way in drug abuse prevention. They can make it okay to say "no" to drugs. And their positive leadership is essential.

This book covers five main areas where drug use can be prevented: schools, communities, media, the social scene, and the family.

You will be introduced to a few young people from among the many who have made the decision not to use drugs and who want to help their peers. We hope their experiences motivate young people everywhere to begin their own efforts to promote a drug-free environment.

At the end of the book, you will find suggestions for what you can do to prevent drug and alcohol use.

Bernard R. McColgan
Chief, Prevention Branch
Division of Prevention and Communications
National Institute on Drug Abuse

Stephen E. Gardner, D.S.W.
Prevention Branch

CONTENTS

	Page
Statement From the First Lady, Nancy Reagan	iii
Foreword William Pollin, M.D., Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse	iv
Introduction Bernard R. McColgan and Stephen E. Gardner, D.S.W. National Institute on Drug Abuse	v
Creating School Programs	1
Leslie Randolph, Hotevilla, Arizona	3
Jim Martin, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania	5
Patty Basulto, Pittsburg, California	8
Sheon Yu, Washington, D.C.	10
Making a Difference Through Community Service	12
Brian Dunn, Lowellville, Ohio	13
Ken Umekubo, Gardena, California	16
Kathy Morris, McDonough, Georgia	19
Using the Media Creatively	21
Sheri Davis, Medford, Oregon	22
Tina Davis, Lansing, Michigan	25
Changing the Social Scene	27
Ken Hoyle, Sunnyvale, California	28
Joe Chavez, Scottsbluff, Nebraska	30
Billy Coletti, St. Petersburg, Florida	32
Working Together: Parents and Teens	35
Keith Pettigrew, Washington, D.C.	36
Shannon Perryman, Santa Clara, California	38
Angel Diaz, New York, New York	41
Things You Can Do To Prevent Drug and Alcohol Use	43
It's Your Turn: Develop Your Profile for Action	45
Epilog Keith Schuchard, Ph.D.	46

CREATING SCHOOL PROGRAMS

You spend a lot of time in school, mostly learning math, English, science, and other subjects. But, in addition, being in school provides an opportunity for you to gain recognition, acceptance, social skills, and feedback from people your own age (your peers) and your teachers. In school you grow and mature.

Sometimes this period of your school career can be painful and difficult. There are lots of pressures to conform, to succeed, to be what other people want you to be. You may feel that you are different or that you do not fit in, and you may want to rebel. These feelings are common.

Often as early as junior high school, and perhaps even earlier, you may be pressured or tempted to use drugs or alcohol. Your decision is likely to be influenced by your peers and by what happens in school.

Although the school cannot be expected to solve all of our problems, for some young people schools provide opportunities to do something about drug abuse — to get involved in prevention. These opportunities include:

- **Peer-led Drug and Alcohol Education**
  Many teenagers are now teaching other young people how to resist pressures to use drugs and alcohol. In order for teenagers to teach others about drugs and alcohol, they must first learn what these chemicals are, what they can do to the body and mind, and why they are used. Like the teenagers in this book, you can be a good model and a reliable source of information. But it is unlikely that you can be a good teacher without training and supervision. Just going in to talk about personal drug experiences will not work. Drug education can also be conducted in settings other than the classroom — for example, in youth groups or community centers.
- **Peer Counseling**
  Some young people need to have another teenager listen to their problems and help them through rough times. You can learn to listen, to help others discuss feelings and solve problems, and to refer serious problems to professionals. You can be a friend to someone who needs support. This process is called "peer counseling" — but you must study and train to be that kind of helper. Adult supervision is essential.

465-434 O - 85 - 2 : QL 3

- **A Positive School Climate**
  You can help make your school drug-free by establishing a climate that encourages others to say "no" to drugs and celebrate positive accomplishments. Programs that use students as peer models, helpers, and leaders for other school-age children are important sources of support.
- **School Policy on Drugs**
  School rules about the use and possession of alcohol and drugs that are clear and enforced can make a real difference in whether or not students use drugs. Schools need to develop these policies if they do not already have them, and you can help to make this happen. In a New York high school, students and teachers worked together to develop their school's policies that promote a drug-free school experience. In Atlanta, parents joined with teachers and students to ensure that their school has a policy of no drug and alcohol use. Most young people want such policies in place.

The following section describes what four students are doing about prevention in their schools. **Leslie Randolph** is a peer counselor to her fellow American Indian students. **Jim Martin** and **Patty Basulto** use the classroom to teach younger students about drugs and to help them learn how to say "no" to drugs. **Sheon Yu** didn't become active in a drug abuse program, but on his own he resisted peer pressure and learned how to survive and grow in a difficult school. Read what they are doing. Think about it.

LESLIE RANDOLPH

As a peer counselor in a high school, Leslie Randolph has seen and heard about plenty of problems — family problems, drug and alcohol abuse, and problems with friends. She's heard about them because, in her role of peer counselor, her main job is to listen to other young people talk about what's bothering them.

Leslie was trained to be a peer counselor in her senior year through a drug abuse prevention program at Tuba City High School, about 45 miles from her home on the Hopi Indian reservation in Arizona. She knows that two of the most important things about being a good counselor are not to give advice and to know when to refer people who may need professional help. "We just listen," Leslie says, "and we help them help themselves." One group of kids Leslie listens to are students her own age in the high school. They can make a special appointment to talk with a peer counselor, or they can talk informally during free time. She also counsels a group of sixth-grade girls at a nearby elementary school.

One of the biggest problems Leslie has observed in her high school is peer pressure to use drugs. "Most kids don't really like drugs or want to do it," she says. "But it's kind of 'in' to do it, so they do it just to be accepted by the crowd. Sometimes if people try to quit, people start teasing them, calling them 'schoolboy' or 'schoolgirl,' or they just stop being their friends."

Leslie doesn't accept drug and alcohol abuse as something she's helpless to prevent. "I try to make them realize why they're doing it," she says. "They have to realize the problem behind it before they can deal with it. Some people use drugs or alcohol because there's nothing to do — they're just bored. Some do it when they're mad, like if they're arguing with their parents. I try to get them to focus on the problem behind the drug use."

Helping other people deal with their problems isn't easy. Leslie has tried to develop her skills by observing how other counselors handle situations and by working on her own approach. "Sometimes people sit there and I don't really know what to say to them to get them to open up," Leslie says. "It can take a few sessions before they really start to talk." She and the other peer counselors in her group received training in counseling skills for a full semester before they did any actual counseling. Still, Leslie says, learning how to be a good counselor takes practice and experience.

Leslie has the right kind of experience to talk to other young people about peer pressure. As she observes, at one point she herself wasn't strong enough to resist it. "There was a lot of peer pressure to use drugs," Leslie recalls. "I was also curious and wanted to see what drugs were like, so I went along with it. I used drugs for about a year. Then I just kind of grew out of it."

How does Leslie react to the same kind of pressure now? "I just joke with them and don't let it get to me," she says. "I made up my mind that I didn't need drugs. I had to convince myself. I did a lot of talking about it with my family, and then I was able to do it on my own. Some people who aren't so strong-willed need a lot of help. Other people can do it all on their own."

Leslie feels a lot better now that she no longer uses drugs. For the first time she has earned a place on her school's honor roll, and she's looking forward to going to college. "I always used to feel kind of bummed out when I used drugs," she says. "My grades were shot. I'd get high in the morning, and I would just take off and cut classes. I really had that 'I don't care' attitude. I was always zombied out."

Now, instead of being zombied out, Leslie is involved with other people and starting to build a career. She's thinking about the importance of the past as well as the future. Mainly, she's concerned about the Indian traditions that are rapidly being forgotten by new generations of Indian youth. "I'm trying to learn all I can from my grandparents," Leslie says with enthusiasm. "They're real old, but they're still alive. They don't speak English, so I'm learning how to speak Hopi."

"Sometimes if people try to quit, people start teasing them, calling them 'schoolboy' or 'schoolgirl,' or they just stop being their friends."

JIM MARTIN

Jim Martin, a high school senior in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, got involved in drug abuse prevention because he cares about other people, and he believed that something needed to be done about the drug problem. Jim's main extracurricular activity has been directing and performing in skits about drug abuse for audiences of elementary school children. The program is sponsored by "Straight Love," a local drug abuse agency that focuses on peer resistance and school-based prevention programs.

Jim realizes that speaking out about drug and alcohol abuse isn't always the popular thing to do. "There are a lot of people who agree with what we're doing," Jim says, "but they're not willing to stand up and say it themselves. If everybody were like that, then the job wouldn't get done. Somebody needs to do it. I don't mind being different. I guess I just felt obligated to try to get things rolling and maybe light a fire under some other people."

Because of his involvement in the skits about drug abuse, Jim Martin has become recognized in his school as an advocate of a drug-free lifestyle. When he was a junior he did an informal survey of his schoolmates. He discovered that 40-45 percent of the students were using drugs, and 90 percent were using alcohol. He himself has never used drugs. "I've always been able to have a good time without drugs," Jim says. "And if I'm not having a good time, I don't turn to drugs thinking that I should always be high. I just find other things to do. I get together with friends. Most of my friends have never had to use drugs to feel good."

Jim attributes his drug-free lifestyle not just to his friends, but to his parents. "At a pretty early age I knew what I was and wasn't going to do," Jim observes. "My family, my morals, and my religion had a lot to do with it."

Jim believes that many of the students in his school use drugs because they let their friends influence them too much. "So many people are wishy-washy," Jim says. "They'll say, 'If you do it, I'll do it.' But they don't really know what *they* want. They don't know how to think for themselves."

The basic message of the skits that Jim and others in his group perform for elementary school students is "You don't have to be like everyone else. You can take a stand for what you believe in."

In one of the skits several teenagers on their way to a party talk about what a "blast" they're going to have using alcohol and drugs. Some other teenagers try to persuade them not to go to the party by saying:

> "You're not going to remember anything — all you're gonna be doing is lying around and throwing up all over the place." But the first group goes to the party, gets stoned and drunk, and gets into a fight. After the party the two groups meet again. One member of the group that went to the party brags about how he hit someone and knocked him out cold — "Blood was all over the place."
>
> The non-partygoers are shocked. "You could have killed the guy," they exclaim, "and you don't even remember exactly what happened!"
>
> "The skit really gets the kids thinking," Jim says. "They realize that the person who got knocked out could have died."

In other skits the actors demonstrate how to say "no" when you're being offered cigarettes or marijuana joints. In the marijuana skit, the boy who doesn't want to smoke tells a friend, "I don't want to do that. I can have a good time without it — without all the chemicals in marijuana

"It may be hard to say 'no' to your friends when they try to get you to use something, but getting straight is much harder."

that affect every cell in your body. If you're gonna do it and if you won't be my friend because I don't smoke marijuana, then I don't want to be *your* friend."

The basic point, Jim explains, is to teach fourth- and fifth-graders "how to be your own person" before they're actually exposed to drugs.

Jim Martin has been a good example of this just by being himself.

"Right now I'm committed to fighting drugs," Jim says. But he knows that the fight isn't easy. "Sometimes it gets pretty depressing," he admits. "One thing that keeps me going is thinking about my three nephews. The oldest one is twelve, and I keep thinking that maybe I can make things better for him and the others so they won't get messed up the way so many other people have. I've known people who used drugs, and it's ruined their lives. It may be hard to say 'no' to your friends when they try to get you to use something, but getting straight once you're on drugs is much harder."

PATTY BASULTO

Patty Basulto has always been a leader and speaks out about what she believes. Even so, her friends in the small town of Pittsburg, California, near San Francisco, where she is a junior in high school, were surprised when she started speaking out against drug use.

"A lot of my friends said, 'Wow, you're crazy doing this,'" Patty recalls. "They reminded me that I used to do it, and it's true — I did use drugs at one time. I told them, 'I'm trying to prevent it from happening to others. I was dumb for using whatever I used.' They said, 'Well, you still do it, don't you?' And I said, 'No, I don't. I don't mess around with drugs any more.'"

Some of Patty's friends put her down for not using drugs. Others agreed with her. As Patty recalls it, the put-downs didn't bother her. She'd made a decision not to use drugs, and she wasn't going to let peer pressure change her mind.

Now, as a member of the Youth Educator Program in her community, Patty has the first-hand knowledge to teach younger people about drugs and peer pressure. Through the program, sponsored by the Center for Human Development, Patty meets once a week with two classes of seventh-grade students to discuss information about alcohol and other drugs, why young people use drugs, and how to say "no" to peer pressure. Patty is learning a great deal about drugs herself through the program. She attends a class one night every week so she can gain increased understanding about the problem.

Patty was shocked when some of the seventh-graders told her they had started using drugs heavily in fifth grade. The seventh-graders said they'd used many different kinds of drugs and that they liked to feel "crazy" on drugs. But Patty was determined to teach them that you can make it through life a lot better without drugs.

One thing Patty found was that the peer pressure to use drugs in seventh grade was so strong that many of the students didn't want to participate in her class. "But then they'd take their papers home and do their homework and show it to me at the end of class," Patty says. "That way their friends wouldn't see that they'd done it." In Patty's opinion, the ones who got the most from the class were the students who thought they were cool and knew everything. Patty felt she'd really accomplished something

when some of the "cool" seventh-graders told her they were learning new information about drugs they'd never known before.

Patty believes that if it hadn't been for the Youth Educator Program she might still be tempted to use drugs. Without the program, she says, it would have been a lot harder to resist the peer pressure. "This program has changed my life," Patty says. "It was like Boom! There it was, and I stopped using drugs."

Patty volunteered for the Youth Educator Program because she thought it would be interesting to work with younger kids. "A lot of my friends said, 'You know you're not going to get paid for it,'" she recalls. But that didn't bother her. "I told them that it was enough for me to know I was helping other people."

Teaching about drugs and the problems that occur from drug use has become an important part of Patty's life. Still, sometimes she feels bad when she sees how many kids in her community are involved with drugs. "A lot of kids may have to find out about drugs the hard way," she says. "I tell my students in the program, 'What is it going to take? Is it going to take a death of one of your friends or even yourself to find out what harm drugs can do?' And I tell them what I've learned myself. You don't need drugs to be happy."

"What is it going to take? Is it going to take a death of one of your friends or even yourself to find out what harm drugs can do?"

465-434 O - 85 - 3 : QL 3

SHEON YU

Although Sheon Yu hasn't worked directly in any drug abuse prevention program in his school, his role in preventing drug abuse is still important. It's something everyone can do without being part of a program. Mainly, Sheon has resisted the enormous pressures that surround him to use drugs — on his own, without anyone else's help. He's taken a strong stand. He's said "no" to drugs *within himself*, and he's held to his decision.

An eighteen-year-old senior at a high school in Washington, D.C., Sheon came to the United States from Hong Kong in the middle of tenth grade. At the time he spoke little English, and he found the rowdiness and turmoil of a large, urban high school frightening.

Sheon's first day of school was a complete shock. In the bathrooms he saw open drug use and dealing. At first he didn't know what it was. When he asked another Chinese boy what was going on, the boy said, "They're selling marijuana." Sheon had never seen marijuana before, but he'd learned in health education classes in Hong Kong that marijuana was bad for the body. "Wow," he remembers thinking. "The things Americans do to themselves!" That same day a group of students stole all of Sheon's valuable possessions from him.

It wasn't long before another student tried to sell Sheon some marijuana. "He said to me, 'You want to get high?'" Sheon recalls. "I said, 'No, I'm not smoking.' I knew it wasn't good for me."

Sheon has continued to resist the constant pressure to use drugs even though some friends of his haven't been so successful. One friend smokes marijuana several times a week and uses most of his spending money for this purpose. Sheon is disappointed to see a boy who used to be healthy involved in such a self-destructive habit. Sheon says, "I know marijuana isn't good for me, and I'll never try it, no matter what they do. I know if you get involved with drugs it can destroy your whole future. Most of the kids who use drugs a lot in my school are skinny, and they look sick all the time."

After Sheon had been in the United States for a while, he realized that the pressures to use drugs among teenagers were so strong that it would be very difficult to change the situation. When his physical education class offered a unit on drug education, few of his classmates took it seriously. "They just

kept playing and yelling. Nobody paid attention," he says. "I think a lot of people had already made up their minds that they knew what would happen, but they wanted to try drugs because they were curious."

Sheon is involved in a variety of activities that make it easier for him to say "no" to drugs. He studies hard, and, after quickly overcoming his difficulties with English, he scored consistently in the top 20 percent of his school. He also founded the school's International Club, a forum in which students from different countries could get together to share information about their various cultures. As a senior, Sheon was admitted to two of the colleges at the top of his list of choices.

Sheon Yu has proven to himself and to others who know him that although it's not easy, it's possible to overcome obstacles like negative peer pressure and being a total stranger in a foreign country with a poor command of the language. It takes strength and determination.

"I'll never try marijuana no matter what they do. I know if you get involved with drugs it can destroy your whole future."

MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH COMMUNITY SERVICE

Young people today often talk about being bored and having nothing to do. They say that is often why they and their friends use drugs. But look around you. Although many teenagers have trouble finding something to do, increasing numbers are getting involved in their communities. They want to make their communities better places to grow up in, and they realize they can help others. Most communities have problems that cannot be solved quickly or easiiy. Your involvement is needed. You may hear about community problems from your parents or friends, or in your classes at school. You may even recognize the problems by yourself. There is a great deal that can be done, and it is often rewarding to pitch in and do your share. Some young people are already involved in activities like:

- Helping the elderly
- Preventing crime and vandalism
- Finding jobs and learning job skills
- Restoring historic sites
- Building community parks and playgrounds
- Creating beauty and fun through art, drama, sports, and recreation
- Making the community aware of the problems young people face

Across the country young people are getting involved in these positive pursuits in order to learn new skills, to help prepare for careers, and to have alternatives to drug use. Some do it just because they care about their communities and want to help others.

It is more fun and means more to you if you are responsible for designing, developing, and operating a community service program — that way, it belongs to you. In most of these programs, young people are the leaders. You can get involved in community programs like Channel One, Project LEAD, Natural Helpers, 4-H, Scouts, and the Chemical People task forces. All of these programs offer opportunities for action, service, learning, and caring.

Look around you and get involved in your community. **Brian Dunn**, **Ken Umekubo**, and **Kathy Morris** are involved — and they aren't bored or using drugs.

BRIAN DUNN

Brian Dunn is a high school senior in Poland, Ohio, and the vice president of his class. He is also active in community affairs. He's thinking of a career as a teacher or guidance counselor. "I enjoy working with people," Brian says.

Lately Brian has had plenty of experience working with people through Project LEAD (Leadership Experience And Development), sponsored by the Quest National Center and the Association of Junior Leagues. This nationwide program trains teams of high school students, working closely with teachers and adult volunteers, to develop worthwhile projects and activities in their communities that will help others and improve the community's quality of life. Each "leadership team" of four students goes through an intensive training program and then, in turn, recruits other students to become leaders themselves. It's the kind of involvement that gives young people a lot more to care about than using drugs.

Within a few months after Brian's team was formed, the group had launched a variety of community projects. These included a program that matches student volunteers with elderly people in the community who need help. Any elderly person who wants a student helper can fill out an application for assistance with jobs like lawn mowing and helping around the house. Students on Brian's team have also volunteered time at local residences for senior citizens — for example, assisting with making decorations at Christmas. Another major project initiated by the Project LEAD students is the development of a local park through landscaping and tree planting.

The LEAD team meets once a week in the afternoon at the high school, and all of the LEAD volunteer activities take place after school hours. In the school itself the team has offered a seminar on alcohol and drug abuse. "Our basic goal," Brian says, "is to help the community and teach students how to develop good leadership qualities. We try to recruit kids who are not generally involved in things and let them know that they can be somebody special. Everyone is special in some way."

Why did Brian become involved in Project LEAD? In addition to wanting to work with people, Brian was well aware of many problems in the community, and he thought he could make a contribution to solving them — or at least to improving people's lives. One problem was teenagers who lacked parental supervision

feeling bored and aimless — the kind of boredom and aimlessness that often lead to drug abuse. "I thought that if I joined the project I might be able to motivate other kids to get into the group," Brian says.

Another problem has been the stress that many families have suffered when parents lost their jobs in nearby steel mills. "A lot of people couldn't cope with not having as much money as they always had," Brian observes. "There have been more divorces, more family problems, and more kids at school who need to be in the free lunch program."

Brian realizes that problems do not always bring people together. As Brian sees it, "Too many people are worried about number one — themselves. As long as they're getting by, then, well, let the other kid worry about himself getting by. I think a lot of people have that attitude."

It definitely isn't Brian Dunn's attitude. That's part of the reason he was chosen as a member of the Project LEAD team. "I think a lot of people come to me with their problems," Brian says, "because they see how involved I am in things and they know that I'll talk with them and take time out to know them. I really try to listen to people as individuals."

One of Brian's most valuable experiences through Project LEAD was a training conference attended by approximately 100 high school students at the beginning of the program. The students had come to the conference from several different communities in neighboring States. "When we arrived, we didn't know any of the other kids," Brian recalls. "But we talked about who we

"We try to recruit kids who are not generally involved in things and let them know that they can be somebody special. Everyone is special in some way."

were, and the whole thing made you feel as though you were important as a person and everyone had a special thing in life. We talked a lot about ourselves and what was important to us, and we talked about the importance of being a good listener. You need to listen to others and realize that maybe some kids in your school don't know anyone or have any friends — but they're still important, and they can have something in life to look forward to."

Although Project LEAD was not developed specifically as a drug abuse prevention program, Brian believes that being involved in it will help to stop anyone from using drugs. "I felt as if I was in a different world at that conference," Brian says. "All of us spent four days together, and then we were sad when we had to leave because we were going to miss each other. I'm still in contact with some of the kids from Michigan that I met there for the first time. I wish all kids could have that experience."

KEN UMEKUBO

For a student in high school it can often be difficult to strike a balance between maintaining good grades and enjoying worthwhile extracurricular activities. Ken Umekubo, a high school senior who lives in Gardena, California, near Los Angeles, has managed to achieve that balance. During his senior year Ken gained admission to the University of Southern California while at the same time holding office as president of the local Key Club, a community service organization for high school students sponsored by the Gardena Kiwanis. One of the Key Club's main activities during Ken's senior year was drug abuse prevention.

With Ken as president, the Key Club launched a variety of projects before it became involved in preventing drug abuse. All of them were grouped under the general theme "Confront Confusion to Discover Direction." The dozen or so members of the club got together an average of two times a week after school to perform services that included being buddies to children in an orphanage, painting rundown buildings, cleaning up litter, and helping the disabled.

Then one day in the fall of 1983 Ken read a newspaper article about a new idea for mobilizing communities to do something about the drug problem. The idea appealed to him immediately. Tied in to a national media and community organizing campaign called "The Chemical People," the program revolved around two "town meetings" open to all concerned citizens. During the town meetings the participants would view two television shows (one at each meeting) telling about the extent and seriousness of the drug problem and ways of preventing it. "A girl at school said she was going to go," Ken recalls. "She asked me if I'd like to go, and I said 'Sure.' Also, I brought along the members of the Key Club."

At first, while watching the television shows at the town meeting, Ken thought the campaign wouldn't be much more than just raising people's awareness about drugs. "But before the town meetings were over, I decided it would be good to try to reach people who weren't yet on drugs but who might be about to try drugs for the first time."

The result: After participating in the town meetings, Ken and the Key Club members became involved in a community drug abuse prevention task force. Everyone agreed that the best thing the youth members of the task force could do was try to communicate about the drug problem with other young people.

Ken and the other youth members of the task force decided to focus their attention on students in sixth grade, since this is an age group when many young people are pressured to experiment with drugs and alcohol.

To prepare for their role as teachers of younger students, Ken and the others received 10 hours of training over a 5-week period. Training included teaching about drugs and their effects and specific skills to resist peer pressure. The training was provided by the staff of the Asian American Drug Abuse Program, a local drug abuse agency that specializes in helping people in the community deal with drug problems. Then the new "teachers" were ready for their job — offering a series of four classes on drug abuse to Gardena's sixth-graders.

"It's really been rewarding," Ken said after his first experience as a teacher. "We talk about everything from good and bad feelings to what is drug addiction to the different types of drugs. I'm really enjoying it."

Ken has never been involved in drug use. He says, "Many of my friends take drugs. The way kids usually get started is through older friends. After a while they get used to the scene and start to use drugs frequently. Alcohol and marijuana are easy to obtain, and soon enough they get it themselves and then influence others. They drink hard liquor and 'eat' quaaludes, trying to be grown-up. Afterwards they're wasted, don't have fun anymore, and feel terrible. I've seen many people learn the hard way — after dropping out of school, getting in accidents, injuring others, or committing suicide."

"Everybody wants to be who they want to be. A lot of that is messing people up. Too many people don't care about their culture or their traditions — or other people."

From Ken's point of view, drug abuse isn't limited just to one racial or ethnic group. Most of the people in his crowd are Japanese, like himself, and Ken believes that Asians are just as vulnerable as kids in other groups.

Ken sees drug abuse as part of the larger problem that many young people face today — peer pressure, conflicts with parents, and being given too many possessions without having to work for them. According to Ken, "Too many kids have the attitude of 'Oh, if I get stoned and smash my car, my parents will pay for it.' Kids seem to be getting more and more destructive, and the value system is changing. A lot of kids just don't have a sense of values."

This can be an especially difficult problem for Asians, Ken points out. Traditionally, Asian cultures tend to favor respect for one's family, hard work, and cooperation with the group instead of just looking out for oneself. But, as Ken sees it, "Everything now is individualism. Everybody wants to be who they want to be. A lot of that is messing people up. Too many people don't care about their culture or their traditions — or other people."

KATHY MORRIS

There probably isn't another bar like it in the world. In most bars, the bottles display brand names of alcoholic beverages. But in the bar exhibit created by Kathy Morris of McDonough, Georgia, the bottle labels display the names of various diseases and other consequences of alcohol drinking. Among them are ulcers, cirrhosis of the liver, cancer of the esophagus, and automobile accidents.

Kathy developed the exhibit as part of a health education project for her local 4-H club, beginning when she was a junior in high school. "A lot of people think of 4-H as just being about cows and farms," Kathy says, "but it's so much more than that. You can choose from 56 different kinds of projects. Also, through 4-H I've had lots of opportunities to travel and learn new things. They even have a foreign exchange program."

Kathy didn't just create an exhibit. In addition to developing the exhibit, she learned a great deal about alcohol drinking and the problems it can cause. She became enough of an expert on the subject to make presentations to school assemblies, classrooms, PTAs, and even State and national organizations. To add color to the presentations, she created a "bartender" costume and used the alcoholic beverage exhibit to illustrate various points.

"I started my introduction as if I were a bartender talking to a man at the bar, and he was telling me all his problems and things that went wrong during the day," Kathy explains. "Then he decides that he wants to have a drink so he can get rid of his worries. Then I would go in to telling facts and statistics about how many teenagers drink in comparison with adults, what alcohol is, why people drink, and the diseases and illnesses that can result from drinking." The presentations were such a success and so well done that they helped Kathy win 4-H project competitions at the county, district, State, and national levels. She has made presentations on alcohol problems as far away from home as Chicago and Washington, D.C.

The main point of her presentation on alcohol drinking, Kathy says, is to emphasize the health hazards and other dangers of alcohol use. Adults have to decide for themselves whether or not they're going to use alcohol. For students who are legally minors, Kathy's message is to be drug- and alcohol-free.

When Kathy gave her presentation to classes of high school students, many of them were amazed that somebody their own age would be lecturing them about alcohol. "But when I got into the demonstration," Kathy says, "they realized I wasn't telling them it was a sin to drink. I just told them what effects alcohol could have. The facts spoke for themselves."

Kathy's high school is in the kind of small town where most people know each other. She was troubled by the fact that so many of her fellow students drank. Even students who were under age had no trouble obtaining alcohol from older friends or using false identification to purchase it themselves. "If you didn't drink, people would look at you as if they couldn't believe it," Kathy says. "They'd say things like, 'You need to grow up.' They thought it made them look older, which it really didn't."

Kathy comes from a close family, and she's always felt that her efforts were appreciated and supported. "My parents were extra proud of this," she says, "because they thought it was right."

Kathy is optimistic about the potential of drug and alcohol abuse prevention efforts. "In the area I live in around Atlanta," she notes, "they're really cracking down on drunk driving, and a lot of insurance companies will take away your insurance if you're arrested for drunk driving. If that's what it takes, then I think that's what needs to be done."

"If you didn't drink, people would look at you as if they couldn't believe it. They'd say things like, 'You need to grow up.' They thought it made them look older, which it really didn't."

USING THE MEDIA CREATIVELY

Whether we like to think so or not, to some extent our values, likes, dislikes, and attitudes are shaped by the messages that appear on television, in magazines, in the movies, or in the music we hear. The media today have a powerful impact on our lives.

The messages about drugs and alcohol that we receive from the media are mixed. Some rock and country music lyrics tell you that drugs are cool — that getting drunk is fun or a way to handle your down side and that it's nobody's business but your own. On the other hand, some lyrics describe the tragic consequences of drug and alcohol use. Some movies say that cocaine is super cool. And hardly a day passes when one of your heroes (a movie star, a musician, a sports star) doesn't make the papers because of a drug problem — arrested for possession or for driving under the influence, or entering a treatment program.

Advertising through newspapers, magazines, and television is another important form of the media. Many advertisements promote smoking, drinking, and using over-the-counter drugs. The advertisers want you to use their products. They tell you how good the products are, but they don't tell you how much their products might hurt you. Many ads and commercials try to interest you through sex appeal, excitement, fantasies, and power symbols that have no direct relationship to the actual product. You seldom learn anything about what is being sold. So you get mixed messages about drugs and alcohol because those who know and teach about abuse tell you that the fun can turn to pain and that you do not need chemicals to be happy.

Some young people are turning the tables on the media. They are learning to use television, newspapers, radio, and films to present the other side of drug use. They are producing counter-messages, and they are reaching other young people. A counter-message reverses the theme of the ad. For example, cigarette manufacturers present smoking as cool and sophisticated. A counter-message shows that same behavior as unhealthy, silly, or clumsy while it uses actions, settings, and symbols similar to those in the manufacturer's ads.

Although **Sheri Davis** and **Tina Davis** have the same last name, they are not related and they live almost at opposite ends of the country. They do have similar concerns, though, and they are both using the media to state their case.

Melissa is about 15 years old, and Kathy, her best friend, is pregnant. Kathy's boyfriend doesn't care at all. "It's your problem," he tells her. The main reason he started dating Kathy in the first place was to get a chance to date Melissa. At the same time, some other friends of Melissa's have been involved in an automobile accident after driving under the influence of drugs. The driver of the car escaped without serious injuries, but his girlfriend became paralyzed from the waist down. At one point she tried to prove she could walk, but she fell down and burst into tears. All the kids are furious with the boy who was driving the car, and angry at themselves for driving with him and letting him drive at all.

Does this sound like the plot of a soap opera? Well, it is. It's a soap opera about teenagers called "Sarge's Place," written, produced, and televised by a group of teenagers in Medford, Oregon, as part of a program called Channel One. The youths also do all the camera operation, floor directing, acting, script writing, organization, and set building.

Channel One was created as an alternative to drug abuse. Taking place in more than 100 communities throughout the United States, Channel One involves young people in a variety of constructive activities, one of which produces television shows. Through Channel One, young people have rebuilt historic buildings, helped the elderly, and carried out many other exciting projects. Almost any kind of activity can happen through Channel One, and young people in the program are busy getting involved in things that turn them on without drugs.

The role of Melissa in the Medford Channel One soap opera is played by 15-year-old Sheri Davis, a freshman at Medford Mid-High School. One of the things Sheri likes about the project is that it gives her an opportunity to present a vivid message to her peers about drug and alcohol use. According to Sheri, the problem in her community is "pretty bad," and at one time she herself was involved. She used speed, pot, and alcohol on a regular basis. She got involved with drugs mainly because of peer pressure, Sheri says. Now, through Channel One, she's helping to make it okay for other kids to say "no" to peer pressure.

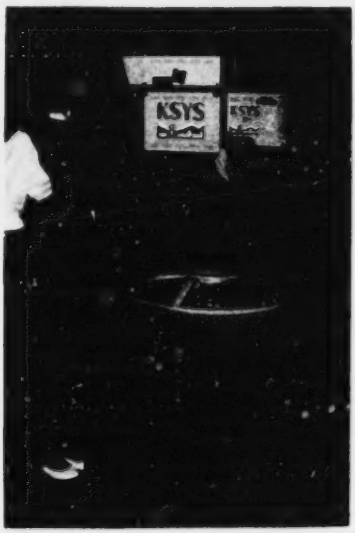
"Sarge's Place" is a soap opera by, for, and about teenagers, and it's shown in Medford by a local public television station. Like most soap operas, it deals with serious themes. "I hope that

'Sarge's Place' is going to help kids think," Sheri says. They might think about the girl who got in the car accident and the way she feels, and it might stop them before they make the same mistake.

Sheri realizes that a TV show isn't enough to stop drug abuse. She knows from first-hand experience that peer pressure can be very difficult. "I knew it was wrong to do a lot of the things I used to do," she says, "but my friends kept putting ideas in my mind that I couldn't resist."

Even before Channel One, Sheri realized that hanging around with a drug-using crowd made her miss out on things that were important to her. One of the most important was the school's dance program — she had to keep her grades up to be in it, but her grades and everything else in her life were suffering. The dance program and Channel One gave her the strength she needed to say "no" to her drug-using friends. And as a result her life has changed.

"Before," she says, "I was lucky if I pulled C's, but now I'm getting A's and B's, and I'm starting to enjoy school." Her relationship with her parents has also improved. She even has a volunteer job as a camera operator at a local television station where she has volunteered for the past year and a half. Sheri is the only teenage volunteer in the group.



"One of the most important ways to avoid drugs is to have things in life that you look forward to so you can start looking at the good things in life, not the bad things."

Sheri says, "One of the most important ways to avoid drugs is to have things in life that you look forward to so you can start looking at the good things in life, not the bad things." Because she turned away from drugs and became involved in dance and theater, Sheri now has a lot to look forward to — including, she hopes, a possible career in television. "I stay away from drugs now," Sheri says. "I don't need them."

TINA DAVIS

Although many teenagers dream of being stars in their chosen fields, few can achieve this goal by the time they're seniors in high school. Tina Davis, of Lansing, Michigan is one of the lucky ones. As a volunteer in the Lansing Channel One program, part of a nationwide network of programs set up as alternatives to drug abuse, Tina won a starring role in a realistic drama about young people involved in arson.

Tina had been thinking seriously about acting since she was 13. She'd taken a drama class in high school, and she had also acted in several plays in the community. Now, after her success in Channel One, she's thinking seriously about an acting career.

The 30-minute play in which Tina played the starring role was a "docu-drama," a combination of factual documentary and fictional story. It told about a group of young people who liked to get into trouble — often trouble involving fire. Tina played the role of an older teenager who tries to keep the younger ones out of trouble, but fails. Despite her efforts, the younger kids in the group set a fire that eventually leads to the death of an innocent person.

The 30-minute show was broadcast throughout Lansing. Tina and the other young people in Channel One have produced other programs as well. All of them deal with serious problems in society that can be prevented — for example, unwanted pregnancy, drug abuse, and crime. The shows have been helpful in two important ways. They've helped the community by spreading the word about the importance of prevention, and they've helped the teenagers who participate in Channel One.

As a result of Channel One, Tina has also had an opportunity to learn how television programs work from behind the camera. She's been involved in operating cameras in the Channel One studio, and she's even lent a hand with direction. One of the things Tina likes best about Channel One, in addition to all the things she's learned about television, is that it's a program in which young people are really treated with respect for who they are. Since one of the goals of Channel One is preventing drug abuse, the program emphasizes that teenagers will indeed be adults soon and, as Tina notes, "We have responsibilities."

Tina wants to do as much as she can to prevent drug and alcohol use and related problems. "It makes me sad to see so many people getting hurt because of drugs," she says. She

believes that there are two main reasons she doesn't use drugs or alcohol herself: her parents and her religion. "My parents have had a very strong influence on my life. They have made it clear that drug and alcohol use is wrong and unacceptable and have strongly backed my decision not to use." Tina says, "They're really understanding. I also listen to Reverend Jesse Jackson. He came to my school and talked to us about drugs and about getting a better education. That was very important."

Tina wishes that more young people had a chance to be part of programs like Channel One. She thinks it would help them to get involved in activities they enjoy so they wouldn't want to use drugs. It would also help them develop skills and feel better about themselves generally. As Tina notes, "It's important to be involved in something."

A program like Channel One isn't enough to prevent drug abuse all by itself, Tina believes. "People really need to think about what they're doing," she says. "They should try to get information about decisions they make. A lot of people get into something without really knowing what the consequences might be. They don't really think. Then afterwards they say, 'Well, no one told me.' Well, they have to get out there and really try to get informed by themselves."

"A lot of people get into something without really knowing what the consequences might be. They don't really think."

CHANGING THE SOCIAL SCENE

"You can get anything you want, any time you want it, and it's cool to use." That is what many young people say. They seem to believe that partying can't be any fun without drugs and alcohol.

However, this is not true of everyone. Most young people would like things to be different. Some young people want to go to a party and not be expected to get drunk or high. And in a few places, young people are changing the social scene, showing that parties and social events can be free of drugs and alcohol and also be fun. In several communities, youth are working with parents and other adults to establish guidelines for social events. Some are teaching other kids how to give parties that are completely free of drugs and alcohol. They are making the point that you do not have to be labeled a "goody-goody" because you know that drugs and alcohol can hurt you and you do not want to make using them a part of your social scene.

As the profiles in this section demonstrate, it is not always easy or popular when you begin to change things. But if you believe in what you are doing and you stay with it, you can make a difference.

It is not just a small minority of teenagers who are turning away from drugs these days. Many are beginning to realize that using drugs and alcohol can hurt them and spoil their chances in life.

Ken Hoyle, **Joe Chavez**, and **Billy Coletti** are three young people who are finding ways to change the social scene. Here is what they are doing.

KEN HOYLE

Until recently if you were a teenager in suburban Sunnyvale, California, and you wanted to go to a party, most of the parties you'd find would involve drug and alcohol use. It was almost as if drugs and alcohol, pot, and beer kegs, were included in the definition of "partying."

But in the past few years teenagers in the community, assisted by parents and school counselors, have organized a group called The Option that's beginning to make a real difference in the social scene. The Option is putting fun and communication back into teenage parties — and keeping drugs out. The main rule of any party sponsored by The Option is "No alcohol or drugs allowed." If people try to use alcohol or drugs at an Option party, they're asked politely to leave and not come back unless they agree to the rules.

Ken Hoyle, a high school senior, is one of The Option leaders. He was recruited into the group during his freshman year by an older friend on the school's water polo team whose parents had helped launch the idea of drug-free parties. "He thought I was a pretty nice kid," Ken recalls, "and he wanted to 'save me' because the problem was really bad in his eyes. He was two years older than me, and he'd been around high school a lot longer than I had. I was pretty much blind to what was going on." Ken never became involved in the pot parties and keggers that were so common, although he did hear about them. Instead, he became very involved in The Option.

One thing the group quickly found out was that planning a good party required some thought and effort. Assisted by four adult advisers, the leaders of The Option meet every few weeks at various people's houses — and more often than that just before a party. An important element in planning a good party, according to Ken, is to choose a theme. The first Option party, for example, asked people to come dressed as someone famous. The Option has held costume parties, swimming parties, toga parties (everyone dresses up in the style of ancient Rome), and parties with a Roaring Twenties theme, among other kinds.

Although in three years The Option has become fairly well known in the community, most people hear about Option parties through their friends. Each of the organizers of a party (the members of The Option) is allowed to invite two people. Admission to the parties is by invitation only, a particularly important factor since the invitations make clear that the party

will be drug-free. "We try to bring in people who are on the fence," Ken says, "people who haven't decided yet whether or not to use drugs. We say, 'Hey, try our parties out.'" The purpose of the parties, according to Ken, is to "try to relieve peer pressure. We want to give positive vibes to the kids so we try to make the parties as good as we can."

At each party the members of The Option have a responsibility to see that cliques don't form that exclude newcomers and that all the kids have an opportunity to meet new people and have a good time. They also have a responsibility to report any drug or alcohol use to the advisers, who act as chaperones. "The advisers are there," Ken says, "but we don't really notice them. They're just there to make sure everything goes smoothly. They help out a lot in the kitchen with the food."

Ken believes that he probably wouldn't have used alcohol and drugs even if The Option didn't exist. The advantage of The Option, he notes, is that without it, "I wouldn't have had as many places to go to stay straight." How did Ken turn out to be someone who avoided alcohol and drugs? He attributes his drug-free lifestyle to two factors: his parents and his friends. "My first influence is my parents," Ken says. "They have very good morals. They do not use drugs. Because of them, even if I hadn't become involved in The Option, I probably wouldn't have been interested in drugs."

"We try to bring in people who are on the fence, people who haven't decided yet whether or not to use drugs."

JOE CHAVEZ

"My parents have been telling me ever since I can remember not to get involved with drugs," says Joe Chavez, a tenth-grader in Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

Clearly, the message has made an impact on Joe's life. Joe is aware of a great deal of peer pressure to use drugs in his community, but he has resisted it. He's done much more than just resist peer pressure himself. He's helped to create positive new kinds of peer pressure by getting other young people involved in drug-free activities through a local program called Project ASSIST (Alternative Support Systems in Stressful Times).

Project ASSIST was established to help family members become happier and more cooperative, especially by developing their talents and working on projects in areas such as art, crafts, gardening, cooking, sewing, and carpentry. The program also provides drug and alcohol education to groups of parents and youth, including film showings and presentations by expert speakers. The parent group meets twice a month, and the youth group has four meetings monthly. Another offering of Project ASSIST is a class in English as a Second Language for its mainly Spanish-speaking clients. Functioning as a kind of community center, Project ASSIST has held fashion shows and craft displays that involved whole families.

Project ASSIST has offered a number of positive opportunities to Joe Chavez. Joe is the kind of person who likes "to get involved in as many things as I can." At school, where Joe has been mostly an "A" student, he has been active in clubs, athletic teams, and the yearbook. Through Project ASSIST, Joe and other teenagers have developed a variety of positive activities. "We're trying to keep people from using drugs," Joe explains. "We're trying to create our own peer pressure, which is not to get involved with drugs."

One of the most visible of the group's projects is a huge mural designed and developed by Joe and several of his friends. Covering one wall of the Project ASSIST building, the mural took most of a summer to complete. It shows an eagle holding the Mexican flag on top of a cactus plant and, in the background, the historic cliff for which the town of Scottsbluff is named. "To me it represents the strength of the Mexican people in our valley," Joe explains. "We made the mural so we could develop our talents, but also to help the community." The response to the mural was

so positive that Joe and his friends were asked to develop a statue for a private client. The group also plans to paint a second mural for their local church.

Joe believes the value of a project like the mural is that it brings a variety of young people together without the use of drugs. Even those who may have been involved with drugs are allowed to participate. "I've never been involved with drugs," Joe says, "but when we work together I try to listen to other people who have been involved and to understand how to help them prevent it in the future by talking it out."

Another popular Project ASSIST activity has been a series of drug-free get-togethers and parties attended by young people and their parents. "The parties are a way of showing that you don't need drugs and alcohol to have fun," Joe explains. "Some people say they like our parties more than parties where kids are using drugs and alcohol." The group has held parties on special holidays and campouts and picnics during the summer.

In connection with Project ASSIST, Joe and his friends have taught drug abuse prevention classes for children in sixth and seventh grades. He and several friends were also sponsored by Project ASSIST to attend a major conference on drug abuse in Omaha. For many of the young people, this was their first major trip away from home on their own.

The main impact of Joe Chavez' activity in drug abuse prevention can be summed up in a simple and positive statement that could almost be Joe's philosophy of life: Joe says, "It's important to try to stay away from drugs and face your problems with a clear mind, not a mind full of drugs."

"It's important to try to stay away from drugs and face your problems with a clear mind, not a mind full of drugs."

BILLY COLETTI

Billy Coletti, a high school junior in St. Petersburg, Florida, hasn't spent much time thinking up titles for himself. "I guess you could say I'm the 'Youth in Charge Of' or the President or the Executive Director," Billy says. The important point isn't the title — it's the fact that Billy is the founder and leader of a statewide organization called Florida Informed Teens whose purpose is to prevent alcohol and drug use among teenagers, promote drug-free social activities, and set a good example for younger kids.

"We think it's really important for younger kids to realize that all the kids in high school aren't using drugs and alcohol," Billy points out. "That way, when they get to high school themselves they won't need to do it either." To get the word out to younger kids, Billy and others in the group have visited numerous junior high and elementary schools in St. Petersburg and nearby communities. There they've made presentations about the hazards of drug use and the importance of a drug-free lifestyle. Before visiting these schools, the members of Florida Informed Teens go through a training and education program themselves so they'll be well informed about drugs and their effects.

Another major activity of Florida Informed Teens has been to organize drug-free parties and other activities. "We've developed a kind of a club for middle-school students," Billy explains. "We have dances and parties for the younger kids every couple of weeks."

Billy and his friends are so enthusiastic about their work in drug abuse prevention that they plan to carry it far beyond Florida. In addition to Florida Informed Teens, they've launched a new national youth federation for drug abuse prevention. The purpose of the national organization called National Federation of Drug-Free Youth will be to develop statewide networks similar to Florida Informed Teens throughout the country. "Another idea we've had is to set up regional camps across the country to educate kids on how to go back into their schools and start an Informed Teens program," Billy says.

Billy Coletti is no newcomer to drug abuse prevention. Several years ago his parents helped to start Operation PAR (Parental Awareness and Responsibility). Then, when he was in sixth grade, Billy went with his mother to a conference on drug and alcohol abuse among youth held in Atlanta, Georgia. "All the speakers were saying that it was important for people to get

involved and do something about the problem," Billy recalls. "But they kept talking about how the adults should be helping kids. I sat there listening, and I kept thinking that there were a lot of kids out there who could help the parents."

After the conference Billy started an organization called STAMP (Students Teaching About Marijuana Problems). STAMP consisted of sixth-grade students in Billy's middle school making classroom presentations to their schoolmates about marijuana and other drugs, mainly alcohol and cigarettes. Billy admits that when he graduated and went on to a large junior high school, "My self-confidence wasn't what it is now, and I didn't feel too sure about starting a new group." By the time he reached ninth grade, however, he was ready. That was the year he started Florida Informed Teens.

Why has Billy been so involved in drug abuse prevention? The main reason has been his mother's work in parent organizations throughout Florida and the United States. "I was always going to meetings with her because I didn't want to just sit at home," Billy recalls. "After I'd gone to enough meetings, I began to think that youth across the country could definitely make a difference." Another reason is that a member of Billy's family had experienced problems with drugs. "I cared a lot," Billy says, "and that scared me."

"We think it's really important for younger kids to realize that all the kids in high school aren't using drugs and alcohol. That way, when they get to high school themselves they won't need to do it either."

Billy is concerned about the need for good drug abuse prevention programs that will make an impact on kids. "At one time people were really getting into scare tactics," he says. "They said things like your fingers and toes would fall off if you used drugs. Kids today are too smart for that. They need good information and good, solid knowledge about what is going to happen to them if they do use drugs. They also need good friends and a social life that allows them to be themselves — a social life that doesn't say they have to do things just because everybody else is doing them."

WORKING TOGETHER: PARENTS AND TEENS

Although at times it may seem as if your parents just want to keep you from doing what *you* want to do, the family is a critically important part of most young people's lives. When the family works well, there is no greater joy you can experience. The bond between you, your parents, and your brothers and sisters is something to cherish. It is not always perfect — often there is anger, pain, and disappointment. But your family can be your form of support and caring, and you will never forget all the happy times you have had or the times when family members have helped.

Drug and alcohol use can tear a family apart. Everyone in the family hurts when a family member becomes involved with drugs or alcohol. Out of that hurt and despair, some parents are getting together to try to prevent drug use among youth. In many instances teenagers are joining them and creating their own drug-free youth groups. Together parents and youth are:

- Discussing the problem more openly than before
- Setting mutually agreed upon guidelines about no drug and alcohol use
- Learning to communicate more effectively
- Learning about drugs and alcohol
- Enjoying being a part of the family
- Seeking help together when problems are too serious to solve alone

There are times when you can make a real contribution to your family. Some youth have helped to change bad habits of their parents such as helping them stop drinking or smoking. Some have helped their parents learn more about young people and their problems. Some have helped parents become stronger and more consistent in their guidance. Parents can and often do learn from children, just as their children learn a great deal from them.

A very special problem is being recognized more today than in the past. More than 20 million young people have parents who are alcoholics. Such an experience can be devastating, and today there is a greater awareness of this problem, and efforts are being made to deal with it.

Keith Pettigrew, **Shannon Perryman**, and **Angel Diaz** are making their family lives happier while helping other parents and youth support a drug-free lifestyle. They've proven that it's possible — that parents and youth together can have a positive impact.

KEITH PETTIGREW

Keith Pettigrew vividly remembers when he first decided to try to do something about the problem of drug abuse. He was 13 at the time, and he and a group of friends in his inner-city Washington, D.C. neighborhood had formed a singing group together. It was the night of a talent show. Keith and his group won the show — an exciting moment, the kind of triumph that many teenagers dream about.

But even in this moment of triumph something was very wrong. One of his friends hadn't appeared for the show at all. Afterwards Keith and his friends discovered that their friend had been arrested on drug charges. With a mixture of excitement about winning the show and disappointment because of their friend's misfortune, Keith and the others went back to Keith's house to talk things over. That was the beginning.

The boys decided to write a play together to dramatize the problems that teenagers face. A main theme was the importance of staying in school. The basic message was that trouble is easy to find, but staying in school and doing the right thing will pay off in the end.

Keith and his friends asked Keith's mother to act as their sponsor. Then, with her help, they approached the principal of a local elementary school to ask if they could perform their play for the students.

The response to the play was enthusiastic. Adults and students were equally impressed.

During the summer Keith and his friends performed their show throughout the city as part of a special recreation program that used a "showmobile." They took the show to all corners of Washington, and it became the centerpiece of a colorful festival. They were even invited to give a performance at a conference in Mississippi.

But Keith realized that putting on plays with a positive message about life wasn't enough to combat the serious drug problem that he saw all around him. "Education is really the key," he says. "If people know what they're dealing with, then they'll be able to say 'no.'"

Two years after the night of the talent show, Keith and his mother formed a group in Washington called Parents and Youth Against Drug Abuse (PYADA). The group's purpose was to offer

drug education programs in the schools, to identify more youth leaders who were willing to get involved, and to organize parents and youth to fight the drug problem in the community together.

Like Keith and his singing group, over a period of several years PYADA went from one triumph to another. Probably the most exciting moment for the organization was a citywide drug abuse awareness week initiated by PYADA when Keith was 17. The city council issued a proclamation that created the drug awareness week, and Keith and other members of PYADA even had a special meeting with the Mayor. For the final day Keith and others in the group organized a drug awareness festival at the Lincoln Memorial that featured music, singing, and dancing. Several hundred young people from all over the city attended.

A distinguished honor in recognition of Keith's many years in the fight against drug abuse was his appointment in 1983 as the first student member of the Advisory Council of the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Through his participation on the council, Keith says, "I've learned a lot."

Keith Pettigrew believes that pro-drug peer pressure is a powerful foe in trying to combat drug abuse. "A lot of people use drugs because they're afraid their friends will reject them if they don't," he says. "Often kids just need to be needed. If they go against their families, their parents won't turn their backs on them because parents will always love their children. But the people you attend school with and deal with socially away from home might not accept you if you don't do what they like."

"Often kids just need to be needed. If they go against their families, their parents won't turn their backs on them because parents will always love their children."

SHANNON PERRYMAN

For a long time parents in the San Francisco Bay Area felt helpless to do anything about the drug problem among their teenage sons and daughters. Kids sneaked, lied, and became heavily involved with drugs both in and out of school.

The problem got so bad that finally a group of parents in Palo Alto and several neighboring towns decided they could no longer stand by and watch their teenagers getting into serious trouble. They had to do something — whether the kids liked it or not. Too many kids' lives were being ruined by drugs, drunk driving, failure in school, and related problems. The parents decided to form a group to combat teenage drug abuse. They called their group "Parents Who Care."

Shannon Perryman first learned about Parents Who Care when she was in eighth grade, since her parents were among the original founders. She became involved with the group from the beginning when the parents formed a teenage group for their own kids. "I didn't even know what I was going to," says Shannon, who is now a high school senior and a five-year veteran of drug abuse prevention programs. "I think the parents wanted the kids to be involved in a rap session or something. But a lot of kids got together after that and continued the group on their own." The kids' group centered on drug-free social activities and eventually became a communitywide organization called "The Option" (see page 28).

The parents and teens spent so much time together talking about drug and alcohol problems and planning prevention strategies that eventually the teenagers became unusually well informed about a wide variety of issues. This led to invitations to the teenagers to speak to new groups of parents that were setting up their own versions of Parents Who Care. The movement snowballed, and finally the students created a special speakers bureau to handle all the requests.

At times when the requests are numerous, the students involved in the Parents Who Care Student Speakers Bureau make presentations to a variety of adult groups and meetings one or two times a week. Many of the approximately 40 students in the group have made presentations throughout California. Youth from the Speakers Bureau also traveled across the country to address a national drug abuse prevention conference in Atlanta, Georgia.

During one of these trips they made a brief stop at the White House to meet with First Lady Nancy Reagan.

Speakers Bureau representatives don't go out to address groups of adults without being thoroughly prepared, Shannon Perryman emphasizes. "We help each other learn how to do public speaking," she explains, "and then we have test panels where we ask each other questions that we might be asked when we're speaking publicly." Once a student has been accepted as a potential speaker, his or her name is placed on a roster. The group's adult advisers handle requests from other parent groups and civic organizations, trying to arrange the speaking assignments so that everyone gets a chance.

"Basically what we do when we go out," Shannon explains, "is we try to educate parents about the teenage drug scene. A lot of parents really don't understand what's going on. They often don't know that when their kids go to a party they're probably going to be confronted with drinking and drugs. We try to make them aware that if parents put a few rules on their kids about party guidelines, they're not going to hate you. Just be a little more firm about it, parents. Another thing we do sometimes is go in to schools to talk with elementary students. We really like fifth- and sixth-grade classes, because the students always have a lot of questions. They want to know what it's like in high school and if they'll get beat up if they don't want to smoke pot. Some of them have heard some really incredible stories. Basically we just try to help them get the issues out in the open."

Not all of the young people involved in the Speakers Bureau have always been drug-free. "We have

"If parents put out a few rules about party guidelines, their kids aren't going to hate them. Just be a little more firm about it, parents."

some who are in Alcoholics Anonymous," says Shannon. "One girl in the group was into drugs so much that she can't even remember two years out of her life. We also have people who have experimented and people who have never touched a drug. It's really a good spread. And when we go out speaking we try to have different kinds of people. That way we can handle whatever questions come up. I've never been into drugs myself, so I can't answer some of the questions people ask us about how you deal with that kind of situation."

Shannon hopes that her participation in the Parents Who Care youth groups is helping to change the commonly held belief that you have to be involved in drugs to be socially acceptable. "It always amazes me that people think they're having a good time at a party and then they can't remember it," she says. "You'll ask them what happened at the party, and all they can remember is that someone threw up or someone else got into a fight. I don't see what's fun about that. I've been to parties where people sit around and everyone looks insecure until they get drunk enough to talk to other people and act silly. I have a lot more fun at parties where they don't use drugs. We remember exactly what happened the next day, we don't have hangovers, and we don't throw up."

ANGEL DIAZ

Seventeen-year-old Angel Diaz has a lot to be proud of. He's making it. At one time there were plenty of reasons why he wouldn't make it.

Living in New York City's East Bronx is a challenge in itself. Open drug use, drug dealing on the streets, and other forms of crime and violence are everyday events in this low-income community, where Angel has spent the last five years after moving to New York from his native Puerto Rico. For Angel the temptation to use drugs was everywhere. By the age of 14 he was already beginning to use, and soon he was heavily involved with marijuana and cocaine. He argued constantly with his mother. And he was in trouble with the police. "Lots of young people get into drugs because they've got problems with their families. I did," Angel says. Availability of drugs and an environment that encouraged drug and alcohol use also contributed to his problem.

But Angel had the strength and courage to do something about his drug problem. One day he was walking down a street and saw a sign for a program called "LUCHA," a community agency that helps people deal with drug abuse. Something made him think that this might be a place where he could get help. He went in and asked what kinds of services the agency provided.

That was three years ago. Today, with the help of LUCHA and its staff of counselors and teachers, Angel Diaz and his family have received a great deal of help that has brought them together and given Angel a new direction in life. Because of LUCHA, Angel has completed all of his work to get a high school diploma. He's planning to go on either to college or military service. He plays percussion in a Latin band, and he's had experience with several different part-time jobs. Perhaps most important, he's drug-free. At one time drugs interfered with Angel's ambition. "When I first came to New York, I was going to make a record with this group, but I never could get it together because I was always using drugs. It took all my money to buy drugs," Angel laments.

What made the difference? Angel attributes the changes in his life mainly to LUCHA and its staff. He's received individual counseling, his family has had counseling, and he's also been helped to graduate from school and prepare for a career. In fact, the program provides actual classes in academic subjects (science, mathematics, English, social studies, and reading) so that people who are trying to deal with drug problems won't have

to face the strong peer pressure to use that they would encounter in the city's high schools. One of the most important aspects of the program is the peer support it provides for not using drugs. "We all help each other to quit using drugs," Angel explains. "The staff gives us counseling, and we give each other counseling too."

LUCHA's staff has also helped Angel develop his musical talent. When his counselors learned that he played in a band, they helped him to enroll in a music school near LUCHA's office. There he's been learning how to write and read music.

Angel Diaz knows from first-hand experience why it can be so tempting to escape into the world of drugs. But he also explains, "Drugs eventually will make you feel bad." After the effects of the drug wear off, there isn't much left for a lot of the people Angel knows except a life without a good education or hope of a good job. "It's tough living in New York City," Angel says. "In some ways it's harder than in Puerto Rico. But in Puerto Rico it was harder to make money."

What would have happened to Angel if he hadn't found LUCHA? Angel answers the question with absolute certainty. "I think I would have gone to jail," he says. "Thank God I got into LUCHA."

"We all help each other to quit using drugs."

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE

As you have read in this book, young people all across the country are doing things to prevent drug and alcohol use and make life better for kids your age. Here are some of the things they have done. You can do them too.

- Say "no" to drugs and alcohol.
- Be a good example for your younger brothers and sisters, your friends, and other younger students by being drug- and alcohol-free.
- Learn the facts about drugs and alcohol and let others know what you have learned.
- Be objective about all the products that are advertised through the media; remember, advertising is done to promote products and to make money.
- Talk about drugs and alcohol with your parents.
- List the things that make you happy. If using drugs and alcohol are on that list, think it over. How would you get them off your list?
- Join with other young people who live a drug- and alcohol-free way of life and promote it in your social activities.
- Get involved in prevention programs in your school, community, and neighborhood.
- If you cannot find a prevention program, consider starting one.
- Help make your home, school, and community a better place in which to live.
- Make a commitment to be healthy and in control of your own destiny.

Some of these young people have had to take lots of criticism for being different. But that didn't stop them. They cared about themselves and their friends. They took risks that paid off. We hope that you will consider their concerns and actions and think about how you can make a difference working in your community to create a drug-free environment.

If you want help in doing so, you can write to:

National Institute on Drug Abuse
Prevention Branch
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

In response you can get information about how to create drug abuse prevention activities, help in planning something of your own about drug abuse, and encouragement to be drug-free.

IT'S YOUR TURN: DEVELOP YOUR PROFILE FOR ACTION

You have just read about 15 of your peers whose stories have been presented using their own words. All of them have resisted drug abuse in one way or another. A few have been heavily involved with drugs at one point in their lives, others somewhat involved, some not at all. They are courageous because they have been willing to take a stand on an important issue: trying to live drug-free and promote drug-free lifestyles for young people everywhere.

Here is your opportunity. Construct your own **profile for action** on this page.

To begin, respond by writing notes as you answer the following questions. Before you know it, your profile will emerge.

- Who am I? (Think of how you would introduce yourself to a person you would want to get to know you.)
- List several things that are important to you right now.
- When I am making a decision about something important, who or what influences me the most?
- Are drugs and alcohol a problem for young people in my school or in my community? My home? For me?
- When my friends want me to use drugs or alcohol, what do I usually do?
- Why do I think young people use drugs or alcohol?
- What have I done to help prevent drug or alcohol use?
- What can I do to help prevent drug and alcohol use?
- How can I make my school, community, and home better?
- What are my goals now and for my life after high school?
- How much do I care about others?

EPILOG

by
Keith Schuchard, Ph.D.
Excerpt from an address to the
1984 PRIDE International Conference
Atlanta, Georgia
March 22, 1984

There are times when young people make decisions that are often private, difficult, even embarrassing. Nothing can be worse than to be with a group of friends who are having fun when suddenly a marijuana joint comes around, a beer is offered, or someone asks everyone to take a snort of cocaine. What do you say if you don't want to do it? "No thanks!" "I'm not into it." "My parents will kill me!" It's always tough to be in that situation.

But think what's involved in that personal choice when you say "no." You are saying "no" to cocaine producers who burn Colombian peasant villages. You are saying "no" to drug smugglers who hijack planes. You are saying "no" to people who will shoot the local druggist to get drugs. You are saying "no" to all the people who are greedy and who will exploit you — people who see young people as dollar signs for illegal profit. That "no" is a "no" to a tremendously degraded system of values.

It's especially difficult because you must say "no" while others may appear to be having a good time. You must have courage because you are saying "no" for your little brothers and sisters, for the kids in villages and cities all over the world who look up to American kids. They think you represent everything that freedom and democracy means. You can become a hero to those youth in Africa, Malaysia, and South America who aspire to be strong and free. When it's an informed decision it has moral commitment based on intelligence and conviction. Your "no" can be a shot heard around the world in the war on drugs. The only bright spot in the United Nations Report on Narcotics is that more and more American teenagers are saying "no" to drugs. The authors of that report applaud those of you who say "no."

So think about it: When you are at a party, in a park, at a concert, at a ball game, your decision is more than a mere "no," "I don't want to" or "I care about my body." You are saying "no" to corruption and degradation of the civilized world and the human environment. And what you are saying "yes" to is the belief that young people can once again be our best critics and arguers. Young people once made adults think about civil rights, the environment, and peace. You are saying "yes" to assuming leadership and to being our future leaders. We need you to be strong, healthy, and determined.

GPO : 1985 O - 465-434 : QL 3